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Demographic, social and migration statistics

Note by the Secretary-General

Population and housing censuses

1. At its twenty-ninth session, the Statistical Commission commended several aspects of the work undertaken by the Secretariat in preparing for the 2000 round of population and housing censuses. In particular, it appreciated the involvement of all regions in the expert group that was convened to review the first draft of the document. It endorsed the provisional principles and recommendations for population and housing censuses (PROV/ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/67/Rev.1) that were submitted for its adoption, and welcomed the attention to user needs introduced for the first time in the final section of the recommendations. While requesting editorial revision and the inclusion of tabulation lists and descriptions in the published version, it requested that the principles and recommendations be published as quickly as possible in all languages.

2. As requested by the Statistical Commission, the principles and recommendations were revised and prepared for publication in English. Upon the completion of their publication in English, they will be published in all official languages of the United Nations. It is anticipated that all six versions will be available for use by Member States in the 2000 round of population and housing censuses during 1998.

3. The principles and recommendations completed by the Secretariat include additional revisions to part one, including the identification of strategic goals, and the adaptation of new technologies in conducting and processing the census and disseminating the results. The household as the unit of enumeration in both the population and housing census has also been clarified. In part two, the sections on the topics proposed for inclusion in a population census were revised as necessary. In particular, household and family characteristics have been revised to conform to recent changes in population structure and the need for policy-relevant information. Economic and educational characteristics have been revised in accordance with changes in classifications and the revisions in the System of National Accounts, 1993. International migration has been revised to adhere to the draft revised recommendations on statistics of international migration (PROV/ST/ESA/SER.M/58/Rev.1), and a new topic on disability has been elaborated. Topics for housing censuses contain revisions in (a) the classification of housing units to clarify the differences between standard, medium-standard, marginal and temporary housing units and (b) occupancy status, where (i) a revised classification of occupancy status has been introduced and (ii) a new topic on

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floor space has been introduced in order to identify information needed to measure overcrowding. Part three, a new addition to the principles and recommendations, provides assistance to users of census data in gaining access to census information, and more importantly, in influencing census planners to take their needs into account in planning the census; it also incorporates references to census-taking procedures, how census products are produced and how to ensure access to important products from the census.

4. Finally, as particularly requested by the expert group that met in September 1996, annexes containing illustrative tabulations for both population censuses and housing censuses are still included in the revised principles and recommendations. The Secretariat is reviewing the possibility of preparing a CD-Rom version of the principles and recommendations, and will report to the Working Group on the results of that review.

Civil registration and vital statistics

5. As indicated in the report of the Secretary-General on demographic, social and migration statistics (E/CN.3/1997/15 and Add.1-2), a programme financed in part by the United Nations Population Fund to accelerate the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics systems is to be completed in 1997. As part of that programme and for the benefit of countries trying to improve the timeliness and completeness of their vital statistics, five handbooks have been drafted in a series entitled *Handbooks on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems*. The status of preparation of the individual handbooks is as follows:

(a) The third handbook in the series, *Handbook on Developing Information, Communication and Education for Effective Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems*, was submitted for publication in September 1997;

(b) The first in the series, *Handbook on Management, Operation and Maintenance of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems*, is also complete and is being reviewed. It will shortly be submitted for publication and translation into all six official languages of the United Nations;

(c) The second in the series, *Handbook on the Preparation of a Legal Framework for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems*, has been prepared in Spanish, and will shortly be submitted for publication;

(d) The fifth in the series, *Policies and Protocols for Release and Archiving of Individual Records for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems*, is also ready for publication;

(e) The fourth in the series, *Handbook on Computerization of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems*, is available in draft form, and on completion of its review will be submitted for publication.

Migration statistics

6. At its twenty-ninth session, the Statistical Commission also adopted the above-mentioned draft revised recommendations on statistics of international migration, and agreed on a set of revisions that should be incorporated. The United Nations Population Division, which has collaborated with the Statistics Division in preparing those recommendations, is revising the recommendations, which will be submitted for publication in 1998.